

Pilot Profile: Bob Ehlers

by Russell Knetzger

Following in his father Bill Ehlers's footsteps, Bob, now 43, has achieved military pilot status, ending his 10 years of US Army Reserves service (Wis. 84th Division) with the rank of Captain. While father Bill, raised in Antigo, WI, flew the fabled F-86 Sabre Jets in the Korean Conflict era, and was in the first classes in 1948 of the new Air Force Academy in Colorado, Bob flew the utilitarian Army helicopter.

Like President George W. Bush, gaining pilot status serving only in the Reserves or the Guard is not easy. Bob had to serve ADT-Active Duty Training, in steamy Ft. Rucker, Alabama for a year to do so, in the process losing his first marriage, to which son Jay, 24, and daughter Kyla, 22, were born. Jay is now starting as a City of Milwaukee Police Officer, a post his late grandfather, Bill, served in for 42 years after his military service. Kyla's month old son, Hunter Jazsdzewski, raises Bob into the status of first-time grandfather.



US ARMY
RESERVES
84TH
DIVISION

RUUD
LIGHTING

A 1983 Pulaski High School graduate, Bob grew up near Wanda (Grange) and Honey Creek Drive. With wife Barbara and daughters Sarah, 17 and Savannah, 6, Bob now lives on Quincy & E. Bolivar, just north of Gen. Mitchell Airport. These south side roots are helpful because Bob commutes to Ruud Lighting in Racine-Mt. Pleasant, on Hwy. 20. With 12 years there he is fulfilling his education, as did his previous 11 years at Great Lakes Instruments, in all aspects of quality --coordinating, auditing, and now engineering.

Bob holds an Assoc. degree from MATC in Industrial Electronics, a 4 year degree from Marian College in Operations Management, and a Marian masters degree in Organizational Leadership & Quality. At Great Lakes Instruments, makers of water purification monitors, Bob did work as an electronics technician, and both applications and quality engineering. In an applications test at the Howard Ave. water purification plant in 1993, Great Lakes was registering excess turbidity, but plant operators did not recognize the significance until the cryptosporidium was in the system, making people ill.

At Ruud, Bob is helping to transition into LEDs-light emitting diodes, which consume little energy, are bright, and commonly last 20 years.



Above: Bob Ehlers with his Hangar 9 F22 Raptor, .45 cu in Evolution engine, 48" span, 675 sq in, 7-1/2 lbs. Canopy lettering dedicated to his father, William Ehlers, F-86 pilot.

Below: Bob's RC aircraft fleet: (clockwise) trainer, Zero, Gee Bee, P-51 Mustang, and Raptor.



Bob's boyhood aeromodeling was mostly rocketry. It was not until 3 years ago that son Jay nudged Bob into R/C by gifting him the above trainer. Bob soloed fast by badgering Floyd Katz into several lessons per week

RAMS Horn, July, 2008, Russell Knetzger, Editor
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